

### What is a child in need?

A child in need is defined as a child who is at risk of harm or is suffering from neglect or abuse. The Children Act 1989 sets out the legal framework for protecting children in need and outlines the responsibilities of local authorities and other agencies to provide support and services to such children and their families.

According to the Act, a child is considered to be in need if:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development without the provision of services
- They are disabled
- They are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm
- They are at risk of suffering harm

### Duty of a social worker

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to provide services and support to children in need, including children who are at risk of harm or suffering from neglect or abuse. Local authorities must make sure that the services provided are appropriate to the child's needs, promote their well-being, and take into account the child's and their parents' wishes and feelings.

The social worker must always ask for a parents consent before

- Completing an assessment
- Speaking with a child or children as part of an assessment except where they feel a child is at risk of immediate harm.

### What will happen at child in need level

A social worker will be allocated to the child.

The meeting will be chaired by the social worker.

The social worker will write a child in need plan. This is like an action plan or a to do list.

Meetings will take place every 4-8 weeks.

The meetings will check that the actions on the child in need plan are being followed.

## **This process is voluntary BUT.....**

If you do choose not to work with the plan children's social care may in some circumstances decide to move up to child protection.

## **What is a child in need plan?**

A plan is written by the children's social worker.

The plan will have a list of jobs for you and others to do to keep your child happy, healthy and safe.

The plan will say how long these jobs should take.

The plan will be reviewed at a child in need meeting and will look at what is going well and what is not going well.

**You can contact an advocate on 01925 246888**